

Udall, Musgrave put politics aside on line-item veto

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WASHINGTON — Colorado's political odd couple took its show to the White House on Thursday.

Democratic Rep. Mark Udall and Republican Rep. Marilyn Musgrave were among a handful of lawmakers from both parties that President Bush invited to a sit-down discussion of budget reform proposals.

They have teamed on legislation

that would give the president a limited line-item veto authority, and they have since backed a similar version he submitted to the Congress.

Under existing law, presidents can either sign or veto massive spending bills in their entirety.

The president wants the authority to pull out objectionable items and send them back to Congress for a mandatory, up-or-down vote on whether to keep the spending.

Musgrave said she told Bush "that when Mark Udall and Marilyn Musgrave show up at a meeting like

this, both supporting something, it's quite significant. I said Mark and I are polar opposites on the political spectrum, but we're friends. We like each other a lot and we agree on this spending issue."

Udall said he left the White House meeting with homework — to generate more Democratic support for the line-item veto.

"I think it's an opportunity for Democrats to demonstrate our commitment to fiscal discipline," he said.

Among the White House visitors

Thursday was Bush's 2004 election opponent Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who also has favored the line-item veto. Bush singled out Kerry for thanks and said members of Congress gave him constructive advice about how to get the new authority passed.

"The American people expect all of us from both parties to work diligently as to how we spend their money," Bush said. "And one way that we can earn the confidence of the people is to pass a line-item veto."